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Yours faithfully Denis Davies

THE WISDOM

OF

NATHAN GRAY

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

DENIS DAVIES

With the Author's Illustrations reproduced in Facsimile

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PREFACE.

DENIS DAVIES, OBIT 8th JUNE, 1900.

IN collecting and publishing these Poems I do not purpose to bring them before the reader as the finished work of a literary artist. They are the simple, boyish efforts of my dear son; many of them written when he was only eighteen, and all before the age of twenty-one. My desire is to place in the hands of those who knew and loved him some slight memento of his Gifts, which to many of us appeared most promising.

HIS MOTHER.

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To Mother.
I saw your face in a dream, Mother,
I saw your dear, sweet face;
I heard your voice in a dream, Mother,
I felt your dear embrace.
And I woke from that happy dream, Mother,
With a soul of purer grace;
Whenever I'm tempted to sin, Mother,
May I dream that I see your face.
Nuneaton
August 1897

"The Wisdom of

Nathan Gray."

amid the joys of 'gay Paris'
don't forget poor Nathan. "
a few months
you,

No! I have not forgotten Nathan Gray,
'Tis written at last; and yet,
Dear Nell, it is for you alone to say
Whether 'twere wiser to forget.

Denis Davies

The Introduction

A cottage door closes; an old man walks down a little moss-covered path. He pauses, with one white wrinkled hand resting on the wicket gate, to look with pride and joy over a wild, neglected garden. A robin hops across the pathway, passing near his feet without a fear; he smiles, evidently well pleased, and speaks to it in gentle tones as though he knows it well. He has a good face—a kind, thoughtful face. There are many wrinkles about the eyes and mouth, and his hair is white. He must be very old, but his movements are decided and almost energetic, and his eyes are bright. The wicket gate closes. He passes down a lane with a broad green bordering, speckled white with daises, and here and there a red poppy or a yellow dandelion. The hedge is uneven, blackberry, honeysuckle, ivy and wild vine climbing and clinging in sweet confusion. Although he seems to know the way well, he gazes around him with the interested eye of a stranger. They are mowing the

hay. There is the sound of a labourer sharpening his scythe in the distance, and the laughter of happy children. He peeps through a gap in the hedge, watching them, as he says to himself, "I once read, 'In the eyes of the Maker the little children are the wisest;' I have wondered since if that is why God often grants us, in our old age, Second Childhood."

The children see him, and waving their hands, call him by his name. "I am very happy," he says, as he passes onward through the village towards the quaint old town of Barbury.

He passes the old church, and the parson greets him from the vicarage garden. Many speak with him by the wayside.

The boys are leaving the school, and as they run by they touch the peaks of their caps. One boy lingers in the playground, carving his name on a sycamore with a new pocket-knife. The old man leans upon the wall watching him awhile, and then walks to the little gate.

The hinges creak as it opens—"'Tis seldom used, the boys always vault the wall; so did I once." He touches the boy's shoulder: "Nay, not there! Carve not your name on God's work; here, on this wall, the stone which man has hewn." The boy looks ruefully at the new knife, of which he appears to be very proud. "I understand," said the old man, smiling, and he turns away; then he pauses, deep in thought—"I remember," he said, "I remember!" He is laughing now, as a child laughs. He approaches the wall, talking to himself the while—"It must be here. There was the old giant-stride that fell in the great storm, it was near that. Yes, it was here, but the ivy has grown over the place; it was many years ago" As he touches the ivy a white moth flies out, and, dazzled in the sunshine, falls in the schoolmaster's garden. Gently he pulls the ivy away, carefully avoiding to crush the leaves; the fibres cling fast to the wall, and a little strip of mortar is dragged from its place between the stones. The boy,

watching eagerly, points to something with a little cry of joy. Yes, there it was, time-worn and faint, but still the eye could trace the letters, and read the name:—

NATHAN GRAY.

"NATHAN GRAY AND THE YOUNG AUTHOR."

"Would you write a book that the world would
read,
Or words for a chosen few?
The Truth, from the fetters of Custom freed,
With a meaning and motive true?

"In the eyes of the world I wish to succeed,
I would write a book that the world would read."

"Then study the world and its ways,"
Old Nathan said,
"Know what it thinks, hear what it says,
Then pat its head;
Be by its follies and its faults beguiled,
And treat it as a little wicked child.

"Old songs are best, yet they want something new,
Tell them sweet lies; or if you would be *true*,
Tell the *oldest* truth in the *newest* way,
Then I think you'll succeed," said Nathan Gray.

NATHAN GRAND
THE PARSON.

" Do you like my sermons, Nathan Gray ?"
" Nay, Nay, Nay, Nay !
I heard you once, I can't remember when,
I only know I never went again ;
Nought to invite, too much to repel !
Too little of Heaven, too much Hell !
You *mean* to do well, but mark what I say,
You'll ne'er bring sheep to fold in such a way.

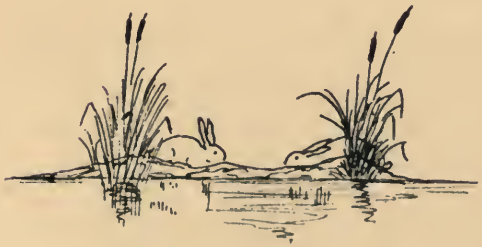
" And if you would ennoble and exalt,
Show men their virtues, ere you touch a fault ;
But if you preach, as now you preach,
Little you'll learn and less you'll teach !

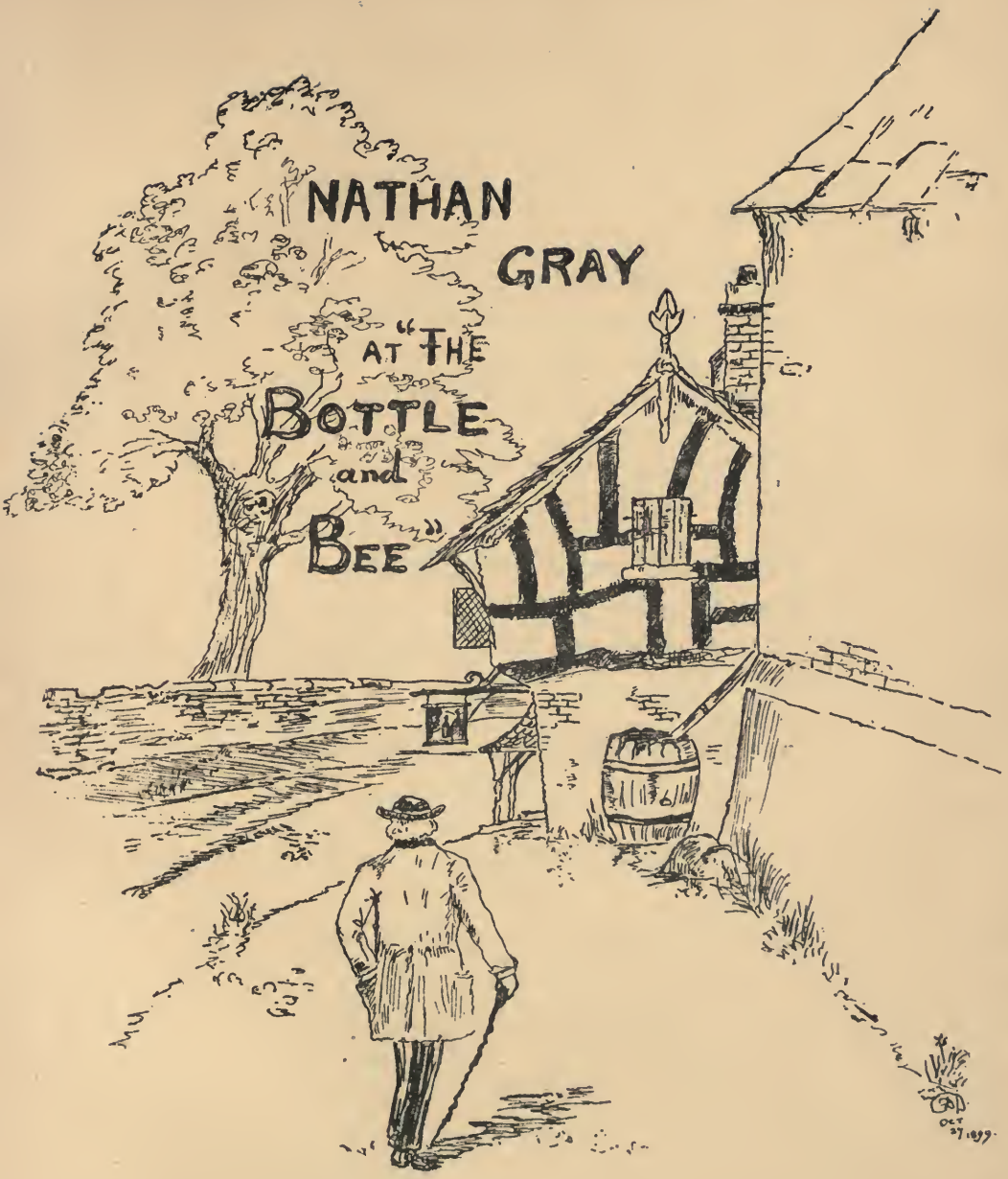
" The player in yon pleasure-place
Theatre of wood,
Who stamps his foot, and pulls his face,
Might do more good !

"Good-day to you, parson," said Nathan Gray.
"Good-day," said the parson, and went away.

. . . . . .

That night, ere the parson knelt to pray,
He forged the first link
Of a chain that bound him to a broader way:
"He's a nasty old fellow, this Nathan Gray,
But he makes us think."




NATHAN
GRAY
AT "THE
BOTTLE
and
BEE"

One winter's day,
In the ingle-nook at the Bottle and Bee,
Sat Nathan Gray,
And with him Billy Moore and Samuel Lea.

Sam. Lea was butler at Barbury Hall,
And Billy Moore was—nothing at all:

He'd been looking for work for a year or so:
When he happened to find it he let it go,
For his wife could wash, and his daughter could sew.

They had been listening to Billy Moore
Ranting the wrongs and miseries of the poor:

"Are they so very far apart," said Nathan Gray,
"The rich and poor?
I often wondered where the difference lay;
I am not sure.

Is the contrast slight,
'Twixt a meerschaum and a clay?
Both were once white,
And both must break some day.

One has more work, the other has more worth,
There are more clays than meerschaums on the earth."

"But answer me this," said Billy Moore,
"What would the rich be without the poor?"
"Richer, I think," said Nathan Gray,
And he emptied his glass and went away.

"That sets me a wondering," said Billy Moore,
"If the rich would be richer without the poor,
Would the poor be poorer without—
Let Nathan think!
I can't spare time, we'll have another drink."

NATHAN
GRAY'S
GARDEN.

The postman pauses on his way,
And leaning on the little wicket gate, he said,
"Who's your gardener, Nathan Gray?"
The old man, smiling, slowly turned his head:

"One who works by Night and Day,
Though very old:
Toiling while the Dawn is grey;
In Noontide gold:

Toiling while the Day is dying;
When Day is dead:
Sometimes smiling, sometimes sighing—
NATURE!" he said.

"That's cheap," said the postman, "there's nothing to pay!"
"'Tis true; she's seldom paid," said Nathan Gray,

"Yet she who works so well by Day and Night,
I give the truest tribute that I may, with failing
sight."

"I don't understand," the postman said;
"Then Nature wrote a book you never read!"

NATHAN GRAY

BUYS

A PIE-BALD

MARE

Nathan Gray went to Barbury Fair,
And there he bought a piebald mare.

As he was passing Fenny Farm
He met the teamsman, Stephen Balm,
"Why! that is Nathan Gray, I'll swear,
But what is that behind him there?"
Said Nathan: "It's a magpie mare!"

Said Stephen Balm: "A bony thing!
Wi' legs like sticks!
I could break 'er neck wi' a bit o' string;
If yer want to sell 'er, Nathan Gray,
I'll give yer two-and-six."

. . . . . .

In the Market Place one day,
To the amusement of a little crowd,
The bellman's husky voice sang loud:

"FOR SALE! FOR SALE!
The property of MR. NATHAN GRAY,
'MAGPIE,' a piebald mare,
Bought last week at Barbury Fair.
Bought from two unknown gentlemen,
At the handsome price of four-pound-ten;
But the present owner now is willing
To sell her for anything over a shilling!"

On the following Saturday
A stranger called on Nathan Gray.
"You have a piebald mare," he said.
Nathan sighed and nodded his head.
"Well," said the stranger, "I buy dead nags,
And collect old crockery, bones, and rags;
Shall I call on Monday and take her away?"

"Let the living live," said Nathan Gray,
"If nobody 'll buy her, I'll give her away!"
But no one would have her, 'tis pity to say.
"I must try to lose her," said Nathan Gray.

But after a day or two went by,
He stroked her head—
"I can't afford it, but I'll try—
Magpie! I'll keep you till you die;
Die soon," he said.

Now dear old Nathan Gray is lying
'Neath a tombstone white, on yon green hill;
But "the magpie mare" was a long time dying—
She's living still.

"When I was a child," said Nathan Gray,
"From the Miller's Farm to the Market Place
Seemed a very long way,
A very long way!

Time changes everything, they say:
Does it change Truth?
I do not know, it may be so.

When I was a youth,
From the Miller's Farm to the Market Place,
(And I crossed yon meadow every day,)
It seemed to me
To only be a very little way.

And now I am old," said Nathan Gray,
"It is strange to say
I think again as I thought then,
In the long ago;

Though I dimly see,
As I gaze o'er yon meadow every day,
Yet it seems to me
From the Miller's Farm to the Market Place
Is a very long way, a very long way !

Now I only know
That it is not far to yon little green,
Where the yew-trees grow,
Where the pale moon casts her silver sheen,
And the sun ne'er forgets
To bestow, ere he sets,
A treasure of gleaming gold
From the warmth of the west
To this Garden of Rest,
Over graves that are new and old."

IN
THE FIRST DAYS
OF
THE AUTUMN.

"Summer has gone:
And yet the birds still sing,
Flowers yet are blossoming
In my little garden, overgrown;
Perhaps they know, as I have known
Since the coming of the Spring,
And through the blushing of the Summer time,
That I shall die ere the first fall of snow;
Perhaps they know,
Perhaps they know!

Autumn, be gentle with these flowers and trees!
Tear not their leaves away with unkind breeze,
But whisper softly to them 'Tis the end,
Summer is dead,'
Then every flower will slowly bend
Its tender head.

The leaves will gently fall from every tree,
To wait for rest
'Neath the snow that I shall never see,
'God knoweth best.'

I shall not tread thee when the first frosts harden
Thy fertile breast;
Soon I must say Good-bye, dear little garden,
'God knoweth best.'"

A little girl passing his garden fence,
Where the Michaelmas daisies peep through the thicket,
Plucks one, as if in ignorance
Of what she does, then drops it by the wicket;
But, as she lightly turns to run away,
She hears the gentle voice of Nathan Gray:

"Nay, hurt them not,
For all we know in earthly impotence,
The frailest little flower may have a sense."

She ne'er forgot,
Though scarcely understanding; from that hour
Those little fingers never harmed a flower.

NATHAN GRAY

AND

THE CHILDREN.

"Tell us a fairy tale," the children said,
But Nathan only smiled, and shook his head,
"I have told you all I know."
Then the children laugh and say it is not so.

"Once on a time," said Nathan Gray—
"Nay dearies, I'm very tired,
Walk with me home a little way,
I'll tell you the story another day;
But now I'm very tired."

NATHAN'S GOOD-BYE.

In these first days of Autumn, Nathan Gray
Grew weaker, weaker every day.
Still, in the sunshine he would slowly walk
To Barbury, and feebly strive to talk
To his old friends in the old friendly way.

. . . . . .

But now he walked with even feebler tread,
And when he met a friend,
He took his hand,
"God bless you, and good-bye," he said,
"You understand;
'Tis very near the end."

And here one smiled, and said,
"No, Nathan, No!"
Another shook his head,
And thought it must be so.

Then he walked very slowly home again ;
But at the gate he turned his head,
And saw the children playing in the lane,
"I cannot say Good-bye to them," he said.

. . . . . .

And standing by the door,
He gazed upon his little garden's natural grace ;
"Long have I watched the seasons change thy face,
But now, no more!"
And there were tears in the old man's eyes,
As he confessed,
"This is the hardest of to-day's good-byes,
'God knoweth best.'"

CONTENT.

Awaiting Death with clear, contented mind,
The even pace of many years behind ;
His wrinkles and his wisdom shrewdly bought
From observation and from careful thought :
Nearing the morning of his life's last day,
" Only another step," said Nathan Gray.

" Only a little dripping dreg of Life,
Only one little thread for Death's dark knife,
Only one fading page o'er which to pore,
I am content, I do not wish for more,
But one more gate to pass through on my way,
Gladly I'll pay the toll," said Nathan Gray.

THE DEATH OF NATHAN GRAY.

The faint sound of the closing wicket-gate,
The opening of the door,
And the village children, whispering, wait
While the woman takes the wild flowers
in her hand,
Sadly saying, "Bring no more!
No! this time you are not too late,
But to-morrow."
They understand.

"Now he is sleeping,
Go away, little ones, and play;"
But they were weeping
As they went away.

Nathan had heard—he turned his head
And softly sighed,
"Nay, bring them to me here," he said
To one beside.

And the children came, and stood in silence by his bed,
Trying to smile; they could not speak;
"Think of me as I was, not now, so weak!
And ever be good," he said.

"Little ones, kiss me ere I go to sleep;
Think of me sometimes; never weep,
Think of me happy in a sweeter land,
Where flowers never die;
Kiss me and say good-bye!"

And one that was too small to touch his face
Kissed his white hand;
The woman, weeping, led them from the place.

And, as the flowers of Autumn touched his head,
"God love them as I love them all," he said.

. . . . . .

A little shiver,
Like the trembling of the summer leaves
At eventide;
A little twinge of pain,—a sigh,—a smile,
And then he died.

. . . . . .

Silence, and then one whispered word,
A gentle moving to and fro,
And the drawing of the cottage blind is heard,
The people in the little village know.

. . . . . .

Among his papers, with his will they found,
Written in feeble hand, his
EPITAPH :—

. .

"Mourn not for me! For, truth to tell,
I strove to live wisely; I hope I lived well.
Nay, do not mourn, but sometimes say,
'We don't forget old Nathan Gray!'
Little ones, when you are women and men,
Think of old Nathan now and then,
Smile as you think, nay, never weep!
A happy life, a happy sleep,
And a happier awakening.

Gently will the seasons pass
From spring to winter, then again to spring,
So, till the breaking of Time's turning glass,
The growth, the budding, and the blossoming,
And last of all, the withering!

Aye! men may sigh for a year or so
When they read old Nathan's epitaph;
But years will come, and years will go,
Then men may laugh!"

. . . . . .

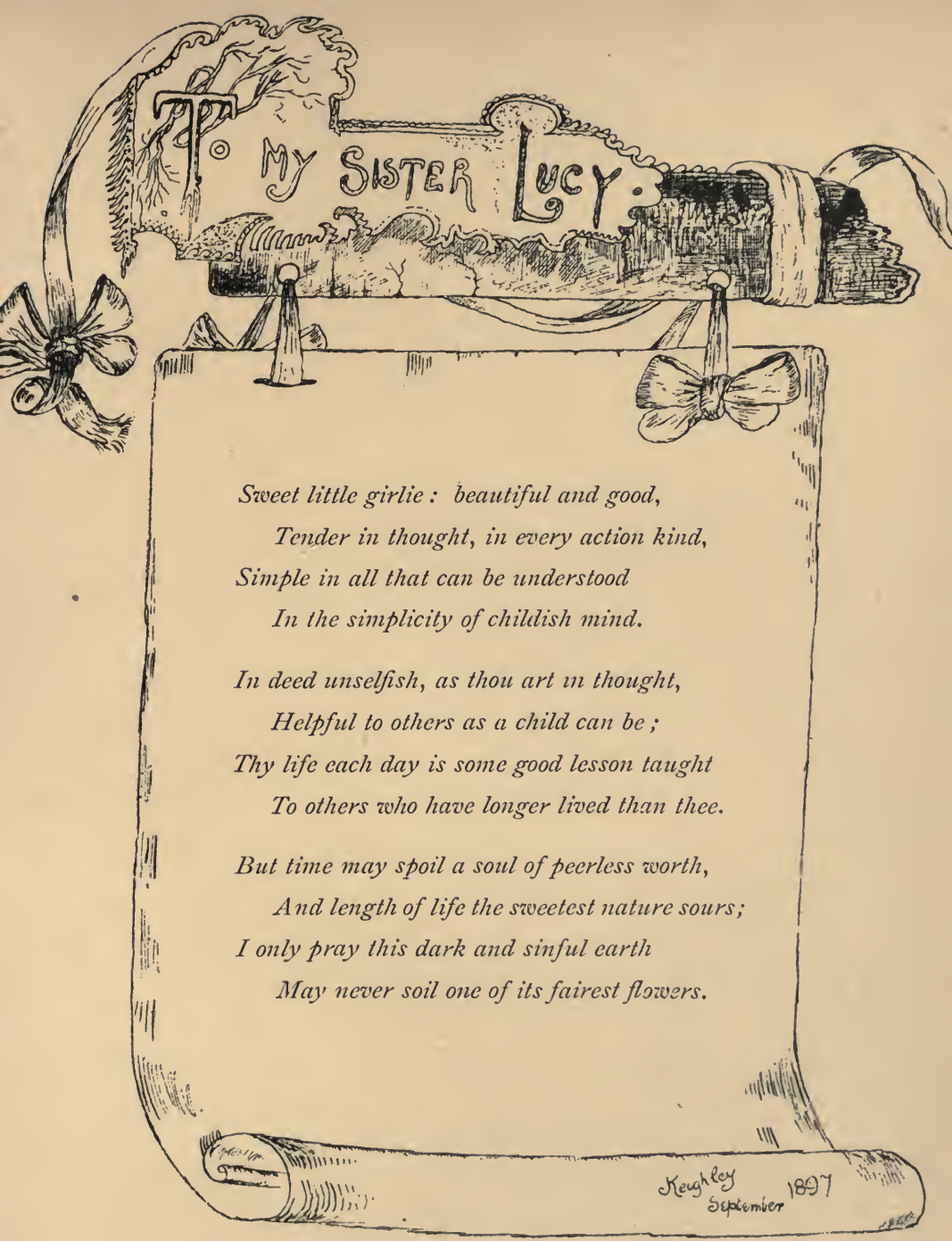
The seed that is left in the hand after the field is
sown,
The feather left in the cage after the bird has flown,
The ink that is left in the pen after the work is
done.

He is dead, yes, dead at last, old Nathan Gray :
But he may live again :
He rests for a while, till a clearer day
Grants me fairer thoughts, when I hope I may
Write with an abler pen.

DAY DREAMS.

Sweet Fairy Fancies from Thought's darkness cast,
To dance before the eyes in glittering light,
The memory-mirror which reflects the past,
The flattering Hope which paints the future bright—
These are the joys a day-dream ever brings,
When Solitude and Silence calm the brain,
Sweet is the song Imagination sings,
How fast flies thought when Fancy holds the rein.

Thought echoes thought and Fancy follows fast,
And recollection reaps bright moments past,
Faces are seen, and voices heard again,
Old songs are sung in well-remembered strain;
Would that such dreams might ever with me stay,
But the world wakes me and they fade away.



Sweet little girlie : beautiful and good,
Tender in thought, in every action kind,
Simple in all that can be understood
In the simplicity of childish mind.

In deed unselfish, as thou art in thought,
Helpful to others as a child can be ;
Thy life each day is some good lesson taught
To others who have longer lived than thee.

But time may spoil a soul of peerless worth,
And length of life the sweetest nature sours;
I only pray this dark and sinful earth
May never soil one of its fairest flowers.

WRITTEN AFTER READING A TRANSLATION OF OVID'S "ART OF LOVE."

'Tis boldly written, and perchance too bold—
It breaks the boundary of customs cold,
Which many modern masters proudly preach,
But Dryden, Congreve, Sedley, Tate, and Creach,
(Who have translated—each in separate vein,
With varied wisdom—Ovid's gentle strain),
Strove only in their lighter, looser rhymes
To please the wanton palate of the Times.

The Art of Love—then must we play a part,
And act the lover with an actor's art?

An art in Love—ah! No, it cannot be,
For Love, like Truth, is all simplicity.

No tutored skill a pure maid's heart can move;
Ovid has lied—there is no art in Love.

THE KING'S JESTER.

The Princess rode on her restless barb,
She passed the Jester in motley garb,
He bent his knee and he bowed his head ;
She turned her steed that the hoof might tread
On the Jester's toe, then she laughed aloud,
And cantered to the eager crowd
Of fawning Courtiers, each with anxious speed
Offering a hand to help her from her steed;
And, meanwhile laughing at the Jester's plight,
Although in truth it was a sorry sight
To see the poor fool nurse his injured toe,
And whine and whimper like a stricken doe.
He heard their laughter, so he turned his head
And in a quaintly quivering voice he said,
" It's well you deem it meet and fit
To laugh at such a heavy wit."

"Heavy, you fool," said one, "why so?"
He answered, "Put the question to my toe."

Grimgrace, the Jester, limped about the Court,
His aching toe a subject new for sport.
In days gone by to please the idle king
'Twas oft his wont to dance and oft to sing;
But now it might be cruelty or chance
That ever made the crippled jester dance.
Once, after sadly dancing all the day,
The miserable fool was heard to say—
"When my brain wants wit 'tis well to know
That I still have a fortune left in my toe."

The Princess repented her foolish deed,
For once, when riding her restless steed,
She saw the fool in the self-same place.
He pointed his toe and he raised his face,
As he gave the lady this curious greeting—
"'Twas an excellent jest, it will bear repeating."

The Princess blushed in sorrow and shame ;
As the lady gazed she saw how lame
The poor fool was, then she softly said,
"Grimgrace, forgive me." He bent his head ;
"Lady, to hear you speak to me so,
I would willingly wound the other toe."
She thanked him and smiled as she rode away,
But one of the menials heard him say,
"Cupid, I cannot resist thy dart—
She has crushed my toe, she will break my heart."

Now the Princess loved a noble knight,
And the Jester had overheard them plight
Love-laden vows, and oft he would sing,
"I would sooner become a knight than a king."
The King was foolish and growing old,
And a prying knave of the court had told
The story of the Princess and her love,
For he had heard them whispering in the grove.

The King was wrath ; no Courtier's words could
cool
His furious rage ; the ever watching fool
Rushed from the throne room to the silent grove,
That only stirred with whispered words of love.
"Lady," he said, "I fear you are betrayed,
But you have ne'er a need to be afraid ;
Go to the stables, there two horses wait."
"But," said the knight, "to pass the guarded gate?"
"I will devise some plan," the Jester said,
"And if I fail, why—let me lose my head.
Quick ! quick as the beating of a lover's heart,
Quick as the passing of an archer's dart,
There is no time to lose, no time to wait,
You to the stables, I will to the gate !"

With this he ran like a frightened doe,
Forgetting the pain of his aching toe,
Till he came, all panting, to the guarded gate.

The King's guards laughed, "What brings you
here so late?"
"A jest, a king's jest; 'Tis indeed the best
A monarch ere conceived—a merry jest."
And then he laughed till tears ran down his face;
"Thou know'st," said he, "our Sovereign loves
the chase,
But we are growing weary at the Court,
And all are longing for a newer sport,
So our good King, God grant him grace,
Has hit upon a plan to chase
Two fools on horseback, servants of the Court—
Why, here they come, 'twill be a merry sport;
There is the King behind, God grant him grace,
Mounting his horse, preparing for the chase,
Quick, ope' the gates, grant them a goodly start
Slowly the gates of heavy iron part,
Fast as a flash two horses pass between.

The Guards raised lanterns; said the Fool—"I ween
'Tis a goodly race." But an old Guard said,
"Fool, 'twas the Princess." "Then look to thy head,"
Said the Jester. With this he made flight
After the runaway lady and knight;
Then came the King and his Court in chase;
The Jester turned with a white-worn face—
"To the left, to the left, I marked their flight!"
In truth he had, but they fled to the right.

The King and Courtiers, wearied to death,
Drew rein at last to regain their breath,
But the Jester lay on the cold damp plain,
He had but little breath to regain.
He said, "My body will soon be cold,
But my jests will not die of growing old,

They will bear the test of competition
Tho' they suffer the wear of repetition ;
Even a fool with a broken toe,
Tho' his life was merry and sad, may go
To Heaven ; 'Tis pity the world and I should part,
But a man cannot live with a broken heart.
My lady, good-bye. I have done my best,
The King may remember my latest jest."

The old King died : an abler hand
Gently ruled o'er the goodly land.
A noble King, and his worshipped name
Travelled far with his glorious fame ;
One day a knight and his lady fair
Rode thro' the land, and they loitered there,
At the guarded gate—where a soldier stood,
Carving his name on a piece of wood.
"There is a crippled Fool," the lady said ;
"There was," said the soldier, "the Jester is dead."

MORRICE AND MIRIAMME.

A TALE OF OLDEN TIME.

'Twas an autumn evening, as the sun was setting,
The cornfields flushed in the glow from the west;
Through the painted window, with its strange stone fretting,
The last ray gleamed and softly sought to rest
In the woven gold of a maiden's hair.
Her young heart throbbed in her tender breast,
Her white hand trembled on the carven chair.
A brave youth knelt, and he gazed above
At the tearful eyes of his lady-love.

"Morrice," she whispered, "'Tis useless now regretting,
It makes not our sorrow less hard to bear;
Scarce a moment ago I was well-nigh forgetting
That my hand was promised to Gloster Clare;

I promised it not—O ! Morrice, believe !
'Twas my Father's wish, and, despite my prayer,
His heart was hard when he heard me grieve,
For Sir Gloster's lands are rich and broad,
And he fought for fame with a thirsty sword."

"When comes he hither?" And she answered, sighing,
"I know not when, my love, maybe to-night;"
Then he thought how worthless 'twould be defying
The favored suit of the wealthy knight,
Yet, he said, "Ere Sir Gloster claims his bride
Our swords shall cross in a fearless fight."
A deep, stern voice he heard by his side,
"There are very few fools i' the land that dare
To brave the sword of Sir Gloster Clare."

They turned in surprise at these words amazing,
  They saw in the shade of the portal there
A youth, gaily-garmented, steadily gazing
  At the pale, sweet face of the lady fair;
They looked at each other in silence awhile,
  Then the maiden murmured, "Sir Gloster Clare."
The brave knight bowed, and he seemed to smile;
    Said he, "'Tis my name, and yet I fear
    I am not truly welcome here."

Then he turned to Morrice, his eyes were shining,
  And mirth was mingled with every word;
"'Tis thee she loves, for I heard her repining,
  And, if mem'ry serves me well, I heard
A fearless challenge, in truth 'twas brave,
  And yet, by the virtue of that word,
Thou art further from love and nearer the grave,
    So, draw thy sword," said Sir Gloster Clare,
    "We will fight for the love of the lady fair."

Then Morrice drew his sword; her lips were
quivering,
She lit the tapers on the oaken sill,
On the brightened steel the feeble light was
shivering,
And all was silent, and all was still.
Then slowly and softly she barred the door,
That none might enter to curb their will.
She whispered, "First, you must understand,
One fights for my love and one for my hand."

She closed her eyes, she heard the quick blows
clashing,
Both were brave and they fiercely fought;
For a moment she gazed—saw the bright steel
flashing,
But Sir Gloster was smiling yet, she thought,
And her lover was pale, though not with fear,

Yet she closed her eyes for her heart was fraught
With a dread lest the life she held so dear
Should in the fortune of the fight
Depend upon the mercy of the knight.

She gazed once more; the blows were falling faster,
And blood was trickling from her lover's brow.
The knight was still unhurt, he seemed the master,
And yet she thought he was not smiling now ;
And both were panting in their fury's heat,
Yet neither would a time for rest allow,
For every blow that fell her young heart beat,
And her white lips trembled in fervent prayer,
For she feared the sword of Sir Gloster Clare.

She saw that her lover's courage was dying,
She saw that he weakened more and more,
She knew that Sir Gloster was steadily trying
To drive him to earth by the bolted door ;

She remembered a song she was wont to sing
In the happy sun-lit days of yore,
When time swept by on love's light wing,
When every day was happy and fair,
With never a thought of Sir Gloster Clare.

'Mid the clashing of steel she was wondering
If it lay in her power to save his life,
If the memory of the song would bring
Revival of courage to brave the strife.
She nerved herself to the task so stern,
Though each word was piercing, like a knife,
Her wearied brain which seemed to burn,
And her throbbing heart so overstrung,
As in a quivering voice she sung :

" He loved a lady fair,
He loved her well,

But a rich knight came her hand to claim,
His love to tell,
He bowed his head, and gently said,
'I love thee well.'

"But her heart she gave to her lover brave,
And he would not sell
The treasure of love, which no sword could move
From his heart's deep cell;
So they fought in the light of the moonlight bright
In a dreary dell;
And the cold steel shone till the fight was done,
And the rich knight fell.

"And all her love she gave,
'Tis truth to tell,
To the happy lover brave,
Who loved her well."

Fast fell the blows, as the maiden was singing,
From her lover's arm now strangely strong;
The steady clash of his blade was ringing
A fast, fierce music to the maiden's song.
The knight grew paler 'neath every stroke,
He knew that his strength could not serve him long,
He was beaten back to the studded oak,
His sword fell useless by his side,
And but for mercy he would have died.

Slowly he rose with his right arm bleeding,
And he faintly smiled when he saw the maid;
He gazed at Morrice as though he were reading
A victor's thoughts, then he simply said:
"'Twas love, not skill, that laid me low,
Right well 'twas fought, 'twill be sweetly paid,
For love will reward thee well, I know,
And all I ask of my lady fair
Is to bind the wound of Sir Gloster Clare."

Sir Gloster Clare, when the day was dawning,
Rode away to his lonely Hall,
And the lovers met in the sunny morning
'Neath the willow tree by the water-fall.
There he repeated each tender vow,
And whispered, 'Tis happier after all.
Darling, dost thou love me now?"
She blushed, her lovely head she hung,
And, as an answer, gaily sung:

"And all her love she gave,
'Tis truth to tell,
To the happy lover brave,
Who loved her well."

THE SILVER SHIELD.

The Armourer wrought a silver shield
For the King of Favorland,
And upon its breast 'neath the Royal crest,
At his Majesty's command,
He worked these words in shining gold,
"I shall conquer."

The Armourer was growing old,
But he worked with steady hand,
And with careful skill to obey the will
Of the King of Favorland.
He heard the Jester's merry voice,
And he slowly raised his head,
"This is no time for jest or rhyme;"
But the Jester smiled, and said,
"Duty, may be, not love of thee,
Hath brought me to this place;
Open the door, make clean the floor,
And wash thy filthy face.

"The forge is clean enough for thee,"
But the Jester said "I ween
This is ne'er meet for the dainty feet
Of her Majesty the Queen."
"If meet for thee, it is meet for me,"
Said the Queen of Favorland.
"I came," said she, "that I might see
The work of thy skilful hand.

"I have seen the sword the King shall wield
But I wish to see the silver shield
For the King of Favorland—
'I shall conquer—'
It is in sooth a goodly work
And it cost thee many an hour,
Yet I bid thee write in letters as bright
'With the help of a Greater Power.

THE HYACINTH.

He gazed at her in silence—mystified,
He vainly sought for words that might express
The hope and fear of love unsatisfied;
She smiled, as though her heart were gratified,
At the ungainly lover's awkwardness.

A fool was he and ever he grew fonder
Of this vain maid, yet he could not command
One little word to make a maiden wonder;
A feeble fool, who could but pause and ponder,
Dreaming that some day she would understand.

'Neath branches bright with summer blossoming
They slowly walked, each lost in separate thought;
The leaves, to lingering breezes whispering,
Concealed the birds, whose songs were echoing
Through evening air, with sweetest fragrance
fraught.

They paused, the well-known way was overgrown,
For lavish Nature wrought a labyrinth
Of flower and fern where they of old had known
A wand'ring pathway, which they called their own ;
He slowly stooped to pluck a hyacinth.

From his brown hand she took the flower blue,
And hid its milky stem within her breast,
But her fond, foolish lover never knew
That this poor flower was happier where it grew ;
He said, "I love," but dared not say the rest.

She gaily laughed in girlish carelessness—
"What is her name? Come, tell me who is she?"
He trembled in his awkward nervousness,
Then in a tone of timid tenderness,
He said, "You know I love you—pity me."

She laughed again, he gazed in wondering fear,
"Leave me alone to think, but in an hour
Return, and if you find me waiting here,
Know then, there is no love I hold so dear,
But if I love you not, look for this flower.

Go, now," she said; he bowed his head and went,
And left the maiden, rapt in wonder deep;
Banished was all her idle merriment.
He never guessed that all her soul was spent
In memories of Love that never sleep.

"Will he return?" she said, "Could he forget
His last sweet words and my last loving vow?
Sometimes I think Yes, sometimes I regret
The love I bear, the love he gave—and yet
I would that he were whispering to me now.

I would that he were in this poor fool's place,
Suing the love I would so gladly give;
How different to gaze upon his face,
And listen to the speech of sweeter grace,
Then 'twould be dearer far to love and live."

She never heard the rustling of the fern,
Or the green boughs as they were pushed aside.
How many memories of the past return
To fevered brains that ever throb and burn,
To hearts in which all treasured hopes have died.

"O, love, return, but all my hopes have fled,
And life for me has lost its dearest charms;
Could he forget? could he forget?" she said.
"Never!" the voice beloved! She turned her head,
"Darling, 'tis true, I hold you in my arms.

I have returned, my love, fortune has blessed
A lover's hope, allayed a lover's fears;
Doubts that were born in darkness are at rest."
The hyacinth was crushed upon her breast,
She kissed him till her eyes were dimmed with
tears.

The flower fell, among the ferns it lay;
He bent his knee, and touched it with his hand,
But, as he raised it gently, heard her say,
"No, let it lie there now, and come away."
He left it there, he could not understand.

The hour had passed, the fool returned and found
No maiden there; 'twas very hard to part
With the last hope, sadly he gazed around,
He saw the hyacinth upon the ground,
A very little thing to break a heart.

THE BISHOP'S ANSWER.

King Proudling surveyed his rich domain
As he stood on the mountain side,
He smiled as he gazed o'er the fertile plain
Bright with the wealth of its golden grain,
And he chuckled in kingly pride.

"Every soul in the city," he said,
"Lives in fear of their powerful king."
Bishop Humility bowed his head,
"My liege, tho' thy subjects live in dread,
The Rich and the Poor thy praises sing."

"I am proud to govern, proud to own
These lovely lands that beneath us lie,
Proud of my crown and proud of my throne
For here I know that I rule alone—
Is there a greater power than I?"

The Bishop smiled and prepared to speak,
His white old head he humbly bent,
But he heard the vain old monarch shriek,
For the king was weighty, the crag was weak.

The Bishop murmured in wonderment,
As he knelt and peered down the mountain side,
"There is now no need to fawn and caress—
A greater power! I might have lied
If you lived to hear, but earthly pride
Has suffered a fall. So I answer, Yes."

TO ———

Written on the Fly-leaf of Lord Lytton's "Night and Morning."

"Night and Morning," you and I are there;
You are the Morning; I, the Night:
One so dark, the other one so fair;
One all gloom, the other one so bright!

But as the Morning sometimes gilds the night,
So have your sunny smiles and simple grace
Shed o'er my dreary gloom a wond'rous light,
The sweet reflection of your lovely face,

Which needs no vain, unnatural adorning,
For Nature made thee beautiful and bright;
So take this book, and when you read, fair Morning,
Think sometimes of the dark and gloomy Night.

"THE SHIPS SAIL INTO THE BAY."

The Ships sail into the Bay
And back again over the sea,
But never a ship and never a day
Brings my loved one back to me.

'Tis years since he went away,
Far away over the sea,
And I only hope and I only pray
That he may come back to me.

And now I am old and grey,
And Death is waiting for me,
But still I am gazing across the Bay,
And over the deep, blue sea.

A VERY ANCIENT PAUPER.

WRITTEN AND RECITED IN AID OF THE WAR FUND.

I'm a very ancient pauper, an' I'm very near my grave;
But I've begged for many a year, an' I've tried for scrape an' save
A little bit o' money, for to buy a bit o' soil
To cover up these bones o' mine, which never ached wi' toil.
I thow't for't spend this winter-time awhoam o' frosty days,
Wi' a pauper chum an' a pint o' rum, an' two little dirty clays,
An' I thow't fer sit by th' cracklin' fire, and 'ear the Christmas chimes,
But we canna' 'ave all we want fer 'ave in these unsettled times,

An' when I read i' th' paper, some poetry t'other day,
I dun'no' what it meant, but it some'ow seemed to say:
"Tha' munna' gi' up beggin' yet, there's time enoo' fer that;
Go out again! an' beg again, wi' yer dirty, greasy hat,
Fer 'a gentleman in Kharki'—whatever that may be!—
An' fer those 'e's left behind 'im, and prays again fer see.
Tha's done enoo' beggin' fer th' sel'; beg fer th' childer, widdies, an' girls
O'th 'Dook's son, an' Cook's son, an' sons o' belted Earls.'"
I said I'd never beg again, but, Lord! I couldno' rest!
So I've come upo' my round once more fer beg my very best.

I am no' beggin' fer mysel' ; I think I've earned enoo';
I am no' beggin' fer mysel', or I should no' come to you;
But I'm beggin' fer brave Britishers, who risk their limbs and lives,
I'm beggin' fer their childer, and I'm begging for their wives!
Th' owd lass 'oo died one winter time, that's many years gone by;
But I was no' left alone i'th' world, 'oo left a little b'y.
It's just the same when soldiers goes, as when the women die—
They sometimes leaves some "little things behind 'em;"
But we love 'em, as I loved my lad!
It's a trouble an' a comfort for to mind 'em.

An' 'e grew to be a fine young man, and then he went away,
'E went fer be a so'jer—'e allus used fer say:
"I should like fer be a so'jer, dad," an' I let 'im 'ave 'is way,
An' he said: "God bless you, father," an' I said: "God bless thee, Jack!"
An' 'e went fer fight some foreign folk, an' 'e 'as no' yet come back,
So, yer see, I know these so'jer chaps, I know they're brave an' true,
An' I am no beggin' for mysel', or I shouldno' come to you;
But I'm beggin' fer them fightin' folk who're riskin' limbs and lives:
I'm beggin' fer their childer, an' I'm beggin' fer their wives!

EPITAPH ON A GRAVE IN A WOOD NEAR MACCLESFIELD.

Under this stone,
Rest the remains of SAMUEL JOHNSON,
Afterwards ennobled with the grander title
— of —
LORD FLAME,
Who, after having been in his life distinct from other men
By the eccentricities of his genius,
Chose to retain the same character after his death,
And was at his own desire buried here May 5th,
A.D. *MDCCLXXIII., aged 82.*

Stay thou, whom chance directs or ease persuades
To seek the quiet of these sylvan shades;
Here, undisturbed and hid from vulgar eyes
A wit, musican, poet, player lies.
A dancing master, too, in grace he shone,
And all the arts of opera were his own;
In comedy, well skilled, he drew Lord Flame,
Acted the part, and gained himself the name;
Averse to strife, how oft he'd gravely say:
Those peaceful groves should shade his breathless clay;
That, when he rose again, laid here alone,
No friend and he should quarrel for a bone.
Thinking that were some old lame gossip nigh,
She possibly might take his leg or thigh.

THE FOLLOWING IS WRITTEN ON A TABLET PLACED NEXT TO THE GRAVE.

If chance hath brought thee here, or curious eyes,
To see the spot where this poor Jester lies—
A thoughtless Jester even in his death,
Uttering his jibes beyond his latest breath—
O Stranger, pause a moment, pause and say:
"To-morrow, should'st thou quit thy house of clay,
Where wilt thou be, my soul? In Paradise?
Or where the rich man lifted up his eyes?"
Immortal Spirit, would'st thou then be blest,
Wanting the perfect bliss of Abraham's breast,
Boast not of silly art, or wit, or fame,
Be thou ambitious of a Christian's name;
Seek not thy body's rest in peaceful grove,
Pray that thy soul may rest in Jesus' love;
O speak not lightly of that dreadful day,
When all must rise in joy or in dismay;
When spirits risen in body glorified,
With Christ in heavenly mansions shall abide,
While wicked souls shall hear the Judge's doom,
"Go, ye accursed, into endless gloom."
Look on this stone, and on this, and ponder well,
Then choose 'twixt Life and Death and Heaven and Hell.

A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy!

"The Jester's Grave".

THE JESTER'S GRAVE.

Jester ! what was it made this grove so dear?
Why did'st thou wish thy body buried here?
Maybe when tired of laughter jests would bring,
Here would'st thou come to hear the mavis sing;
Perchance thy brain, soothed by the rippling stream,
Thought sweeter thoughts and dreamed a nobler dream.

Perchance in youth, if then thou knew'st this grove,
Here would'st thou come to whisper words of love;
When nought save sunbeams peeping through the shade
Saw thee steal kisses from some willing maid.

How sweet in summer must it be to rove
Within the shadows of this lovely grove.

In Spring this glade in vernal glory dressed,
With Summer's promise hidden in her breast,
All redolent and verdurous in growth;
There is no wonder leaving was so loth!

'Tis Autumn now, yet Fancy clothes the trees
With all the garments robbed by Autumn breeze;
Softly the last few leaves are falling down,
And a gorgeous robe of golden brown
Has fallen on thy tomb, so that I need
To brush the leaves aside ere I can read
The worn inscription written on the stone
In letters old, o'er which the moss has grown.
Hast thou not "set the table on a roar?"
Jests do not die when Jesters are no more;
Good jests live long, and, living long, have grown
Till witless knaves repeat them as their own,

Had'st thou no Hamlet, merry knave,
To say "Alas" beside thy grave,
Maybe some rustic yokel passing by
Would pause awhile, with tear moistened eye;
Then thinking of the jests he used to hear,
A smile would come to drive away the tear.
May many a flower blossom near thy bed,
May many a bird sing sweetly o'er thy head,
And may the sweetest sunshine God e'er gave
Shed brightest blessings o'er the Jester's grave.

"FOUR LOVERS AND A LADY FAIR."

One was a soldier, bearded black,
Right ready with sword, and fond of sack;
His nature was rough as his tangled hair,
And he was in love with my lady fair.

One was a courtier, studied in grace,
With a flattering tongue, and a handsome face;
With a proudly polished, well-favoured air,
And he was in love with my lady fair.

One was a scholar, with white worn face,
Sombre in dress, with a scorn for lace;
His brow was wrinkled with study and care,
And he was in love with my lady fair.

I was a page and my lady's slave,
And my heart was light, though my face was grave,
And I was the happiest lover there,
For I was beloved by my lady fair.

The soldier, the courtier, the scholar met,
The soldier's face was in anger set,
The courtier was pale for lack of paint,
The scholar sighed like an injured saint.

The soldier commanded the scholar to speak,
So he turned and cursed them both in Greek.

In the very heat of their worthless rage,
The soldier sent for my lady's page.

I obeyed the summons, and standing still,
I bowed my head to await their will.

Said the scholar, calmly, "Master Page,
I, by your leave, will explain this rage,
For this same courtier, and the soldier there,
And I, are in love with your lady fair.

"Now, to set our mournful minds at rest,
Ascertain which she loveth best."

I promised in duty to obey,
But paused at the oaken door to say
That it might be meet to lay down the swords,
And cool their spleen with wine and words.

So I left the three carousing there,
And repaired to the bower of my lady fair.

Long they laughed o'er the rich wine red,
Till they deemed it well to retire to bed.

But ere they staggered to the stair,
They were met by a page and a lady fair.

The courtier endeavoured to vent a vow,
And lost his hat in a lowly bow;
The scholar stuttered at half a word,
The soldier stumbled over his sword.

Then they all three climbed up the winding stair,
And left me alone with my lady fair.

The gallant soldier fell in fight,
The courtier caught a cold one night,
And, for lack of something to live for, died;
The scholar lived long, he bravely tried
To bear his loss, but grief and pain
Wrought a change in his wearied brain.

Yet ere he went to—wherever he be,
He penned these lines in his lunacy:
"Four men lived in a luckless age,
A soldier, a courtier, a scholar, a page;
Three lives were ruined, one was blessed;
Three hearts were broken, guess the rest."

SUMMER DAYS.

The Sun has set its jewels in the sea,
And many a stone is shining in the sand;
The Sea has sent its sweetest sighs to be
Mingled with scents from Summer's flower-land;

The white Sea-Birds are waving languid wings,
Or wading slowly o'er the wave-worn sand;
High over golden corn the skylark sings,
Rejoicing in the beauty of the land.

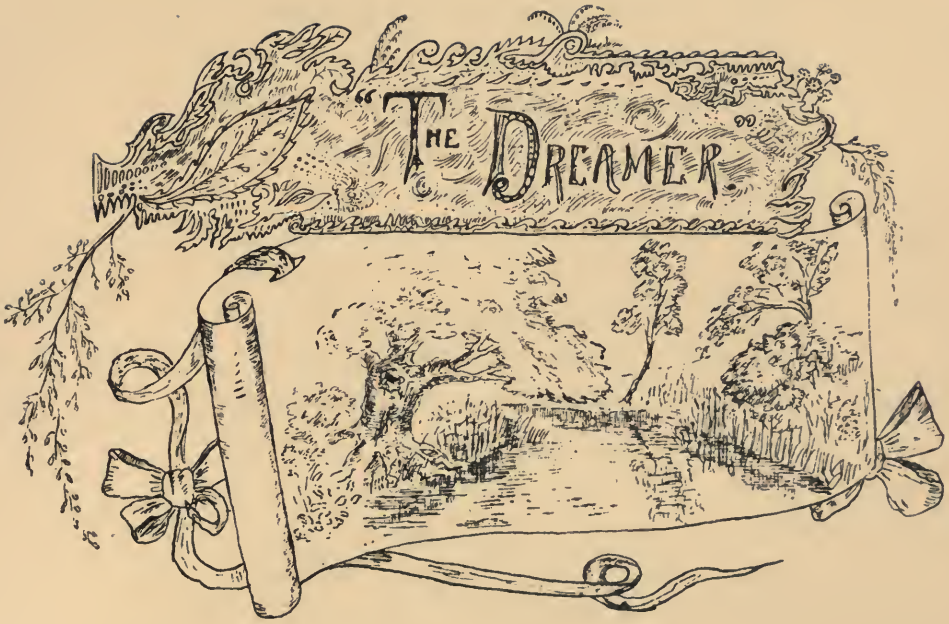
The Mountain Trees their slender heads have bowed,
As they obeyed the wind, which softly sighed;
The Sun is shining through a fleecy cloud,
Whose shadow moves across the mountain side.

Would you might live for ever, Summer Day,
But Night must come and you must fade away.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

It seemed to me as if a heavenly star,
Fraught with the echoes from an angel's lyre,
Had fallen to this dark earth from afar,
A blessing to enchant us and inspire.

Had fallen, circling, from its silver sphere,
Wafting its sweetness through the trembling air
Into a dreaming lake, deep, calm and clear,
Where every ripple wrought a music rare.

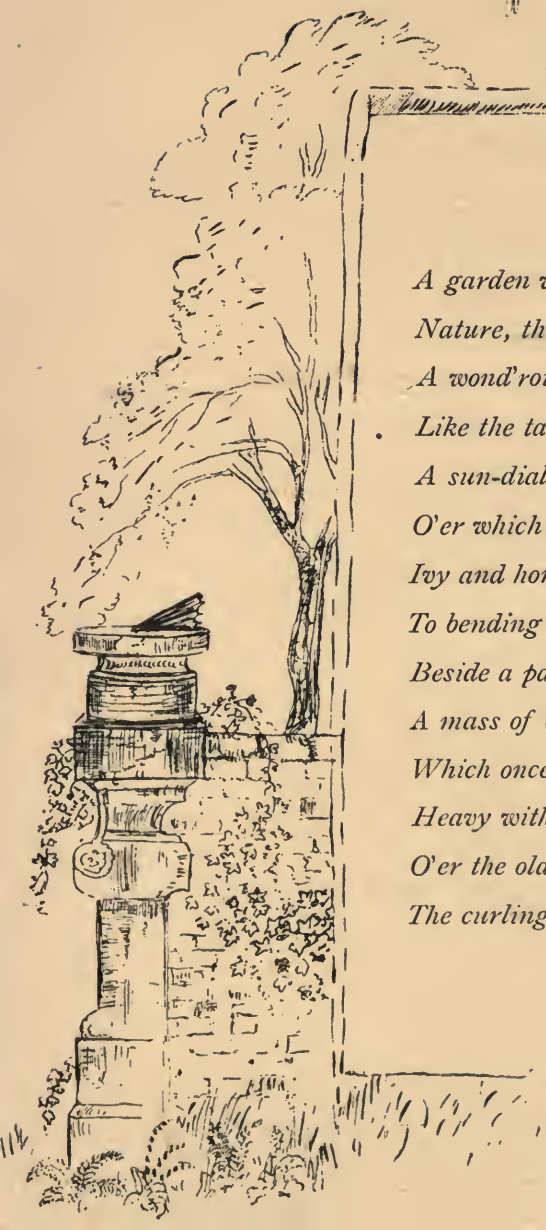

"The Dreamer"

I lay on the bank of a beautiful stream,
Where an artist might paint or a poet might dream,
Where Nature was clothed in sunbeams bright,
And the stream was shining in summer light,
Save where the trees hung over the brink,
As weary travellers stoop to drink,
Or like beauties vain that could not pass
Ere they gazed in their crystal looking-glass;
And some considered themselves so fair
That they kissed the image reflected there.
Beneath their boughs was a dark, cool shade,
Where the silver splash of a trout had made
Rings which rippled themselves away,
Chasing and catching each other in play.
And I nothing saw but what God had made,
In the sunshine's glare or in coolest shade;
Heard nought save the song which the breeze was
bringing
From the river trees as it taught them singing,

And the stream's sweet song in water-music played,
And the soft sweet buzz the honey bees made,
And from many a leafy branch I heard
Some sweet song sung by an unseen bird.
In such a place and on such a day
I could dream—I could dream my life away;
For with half-closed eyes and wand'ring thought
I gazed on the wonder-work God had wrought,
With no help from the rude, rough hand of man
Who destroys the work which God began;
But Nature, untouched by unskilful hand,
The loveliest scene in a lovely land:
And I wondered as I lay thinking there
Which of God's works to consider most fair.
But then I heard a voice so sweet,
Which made my heart with rapture beat—
The sweetest voice that the world has known,
The voice of the maiden I call my own.

And I saw her coming beside the stream,
Wrapt in the light of a sweet sunbeam,
In her eyes a thousand beauties lurk,
Woman—thou art God's greatest work !

The Neglected Garden



A garden wild, neglected and yet fair,
Nature, the only gard'ner working there,
A wond'rous wealth of beauty all run wild,
Like the tangled hair of a careless child,
A sun-dial green with moss and weather stain,
O'er which laburnums shed their golden rain,
Ivy and honeysuckle cling
To bending boughs where thrushes sing.
Beside a pathway, near the sun-dial, stood
A mass of broken glass and rotting wood,
Which once had covered many a laden bough
Heavy with bunches of ripe grapes; but now,
O'er the old iron gate of the garden, twine
The curling tendrils of the truant vine.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

With head bent low, in sorrow and shame,
A penitent kneels alone;
There is only a flickering, feeble flame
In the crevice of carven stone,
But the gold of the little cross is bright,
And the Virgin's sorrowful face is white.

And there are some who pass with careless tread:
A lady pauses by the penitent
And whispers something—what she said
I cannot tell—I only heard
The echo of a foolish word,
And a little laugh of merriment.

Laugh, lady, laugh! in your handsome home,
There it is silver, here it is steel;
It echoes harsh 'neath the noble dome,
Where the poor and the penitent kneel.

A little flickering of feeble light
In a crevice of carven stone,
But the Virgin's sorrowful face is white,
And the little golden cross is bright,
Where a young priest prays alone,

While the women go their separate ways—
The lady who laughs, and the woman who prays.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

From the quaint street, crowded with country folk,
Under the ancient arch of carved stone,
And through the heavy doors of time-worn oak,
I passed into the peaceful place alone.

The ill-timed laughter of the loit'ring throng
Had sought an entrance through the portal there,
Like the rude refrain of unseemly song,
Breaking upon the tranquil peace of prayer.

I walked beneath the trees, whose faded leaves
Fell, through the sunbeams, on the dying flowers;
I saw the grey Cathedral's crumbling eaves
Weeping in memory of Autumn showers.

And long I gazed, entranced in wondrous awe,
At this great work of man so nobly wrought;
The offspring of a faith, whose only law
Was love, a lesson that their Saviour taught.

THE WORLD'S AWAKENING.

"And he that might the vantage best have took,
found out the remedy." MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

"And He cometh and findeth them sleeping."
S. MARK xiv., 37.

He was a Man—although the Son of God—
Mortal enough to love His life;
There in the Garden of Gethsemane
He prayed in sorrow and in agony—
Mortal enough to fear the strife.

He prayed alone, in awful anguish weeping;
He prayed for more than earthly power—
Peter and Zebedee's two sons were sleeping:
"Could'st not thou watch one hour?"

"And when He returned He found them asleep again."
S. MARK xiv., 40.

And again He went away and prayed
In the Garden's dreary gloom:
And spake the same words, sore afraid,
Of inevitable doom.

Never did man so bitterly weep,
As the sorrowful Saviour then;
But some must suffer while others sleep:
For "He found them asleep again."

"And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them: "Sleep on now and take your rest, it is enough, the hour has come." S. MARK xiv., 41.

The third time He cometh to them and saith:
"Sleep on now, and take your rest,
It is enough." He was waiting for death
With a calm and peaceful breast.

"Sleep on now," and still we would sleep
But for his suffering;
From this great sacrifice we reap
A sweet awakening.

CHILD'S THOUGHTS.

To Nellie.

The big red sun has gone to rest,
Each little bird sleeps in its little nest;
And every flower has bent its head,
And put its little leaves to bed.
The stars have come out to have a peep
At all the things that are fast asleep;
The wind is making the big trees cry;
The moon looks pale in the great dark sky.
I wonder whether the stars can see;
I wonder what they are thinking of me;
But, poor little things—they look so small,
Perhaps they cannot think at all.
I should be asleep, but I'm wide awake,
Yet I will be quiet for Mother's sake.

SPRING

Spring steals the robe of Winter from the glades,
The songs of birds are trembling in the wind ;
Within the woodland green and slender blades
Pierce the dead leaves that Autumn left behind.

And many little tender tongues of green
Answer the invitation of the sun ;
On drooping boughs, where late the frost was seen,
A thousand little lives have just begun.

Within each bud a blossom bright is treasured,
But soon the sun their beauty will unfold ;
And ere old Time a few more months has measured,
This verdure will be tinged with Summer gold.

SONNET.

O memories of Sweet Summer—sunshine days,
When in a lovely land, thro' flowery ways,
We wandered in a dream of happiness ;
Sometimes the memory of a sweet caress
Returns to gild the gloom of loneliness ;
Often the strain of some old song is heard,
Or the sweet echo of a whispered word.
There is no dearer joy, no sweeter bliss,
Than to give "Love for Love," and kiss for kiss,
A King his Kingdom might exchange for this ;
A King would lay his golden sceptre down,
And gladly cast aside his jewelled crown,
Renounce the Pomp and Power which greatness gave,
To be Love's subject, and a beauty's slave.

ONE YEAR OF LOVE.

'Twas Spring, and promise peeped with cheerful eyes
Through every new-born beauty of the land;
In a garden—a veiled dream of Paradise—
Whisp'ring, they wandered, happy, hand-in-hand,
A sweet bliss, heralded by lovers' sighs,
Was near.

'Twas Summer, in the garden flowered fair,
Luxuriously o'ergrown, and richly bright—
The lovers walked, 'neath bending branches there,
In the sweet happiness of Summer light;
Tender words trembled in the fragrant air
So dear.

'Twas Autumn, and the last leaves fell to sweep
Over the flowers, drooping as they fade,
Earth was preparing for a restful sleep;
The lover whispered to the thoughtful maid,
He sought her eyes, but only there to reap
A fear.

'Twas Winter, and he stood alone, bereft,
The frost of suffering silvered o'er his hair;
Memory, all that a life had left,
Was repeating the past in the Garden there;
A sob from a heart in sorrow reft—
A tear.

WOODLANDS.

Sweet recollections of that woodland scene,
Where mingle many boughs of many trees,
So closely clothed in Summer's glorious green
By lavish Nature, that the gentle breeze
Can scarcely breathe its fragrance thro' the leaves,
So dense a canopy the foliage weaves.

But here and there a sunbeam bright,
Thro' the transparent green,
Has shed the glory of its golden light
To warm the woodland scene.

JANUARY.

With ruffled feathers and with drooping wings,
The thrush is resting on a leafless bough ;
Once she sang sweetly, now she never sings,
Her soul is songless, for no sun shines now.

The Summer's green robed herald, Spring,
A thousand promises will bring
To wake the sleeping song-soul of the bird ;
And once again her silvery notes will ring,
And many songs of Joy and Hope be heard.

But lo, the Sun, now breaking through the cloud,
Sheds its sweet radiance like an angel's smile,
Lifts from the dewy grass the cold white shroud
Which hangs uncertain in the air awhile,
Then, melting in the Sun, fast fades away,
Leaving unveiled the young year's first fair day.

O what a wond'rous change is there,
A thousand new born beauties fair
The sunshine brings,
And the song-thrush, through the sweet warm air,
So softly sings.

Sing on, sweet bird, I love to hear thee sing,
Is not thy song a harbinger of Spring?

SUMMER SHOWERS.

All day the falling of the gentle rain
Had wrought its music on the window pane,
But now it ceases, and the grateful leaves
Shed many tears from the ivied eaves.
The glist'ning drops fast fall upon the ground,
And, as they strike the soil, a soft, sad sound,
Like long-pent sob or sorrow-laden sigh,
Is borne upon the breeze which passes by,
Gathering the fragrance from the freshened flowers,
Which ever breathe sweet thanks for Summer showers.

THE FALLEN OAK.

A thrush is singing in a hawthorn tree,
Is there not sorrow in its melody?
Why should this bird in Spring-time be distressed?
Perhaps in other days it built its nest
Within the fallen oak—perhaps was born
Under its branches; now it sees them torn,
Where first it heard the breezes whispering,
Where first the Summer taught its soul to sing;
Now must it seek another spot to rest,
Another tree in which to build its nest.
Though once thy leaves concealed its home of joy,
Beyond the reach of every truant boy,
Thou canst not feel the tangled ivy clinging,
Thou canst not hear the mourner sadly singing.

A STREET IN SHEFFIELD.

Here in this narrow, neglected street,
Where the smoke dims the light of day,
The clogs are clattering on weary feet,
Where the poorest of children play.

Poverty pales each shrunken face,
Death darkens many a day;
But, midst their misery and disgrace,
Someone will pause to pray.

And though ignorance reigns a monarch there,
And narrows every mind,
It may be a pure and noble prayer
From a soul that is not blind.

TO ———.

Thoughts of the Past, which steal all Present duty,
And rob the Future of ambition's view ;
Though I possess but memory of your beauty,
My heart is still a servant ever true,
My mind—an artist ever painting you.

GOLDEN HAIR.

It seemed as if the Summer sunshine proud,
Had gathered glory from each golden cloud,
And caught the rippling waves from sunlit streams
To weave a wonder worthy of thy head.
It seemed as if the Sun, to Summer wed,
Blended the beauty of his brightest beams
With the soft light of his last dying ray,
And this sweet radiance o'er thy beauty shed,
To crown thee as the fairest Queen of May.

LOVE.

Two of God's children wandered in a wood,
  Where Nature showed the secrets of her horde :
Shyly the Sun peeped through the leafy hood,
  Casting the golden freckles o'er the sward.

Summer was smiling yet through Autumn's frown,
  Though withered leaves fell circling from above ;
Time's hand had only weaved a golden crown,
  It seemed to them to glorify their love—

A love that touched the harp-strings of their souls,
  A music that the soul alone can hear ;
Thoughts were like faded words on sacred scrolls,
  Like mem'ry pictures far away—yet near.

Love seeks his messengers in gentle eyes
  To bear his meaning, words are far too crude ;
Ere the lips part the sweet intention dies,
  And yet they know—their souls have understood.

LOVE'S DELAY.

Her sweet lips tempted, yet he feared to kiss,
Like one who trembles on the brink of bliss,
Like one who hopes to gain the happiness,
Yet pauses even when he might possess,
For often, we possessing, satiate;
It is far sweeter to anticipate.
O, what a rapturous joy is this
Impatient pleasure which precedes a kiss;
He knew the blossom bent beneath his power,
And yet he lingered ere he plucked the flower;
Though well he knew how sweet a bliss 'twould
bring,
There was a strange delight in lingering;
Her tender, timid eyes the fondest love confessed,
But faltering words forbid, what flatt'ring eyes
request.

TO ——

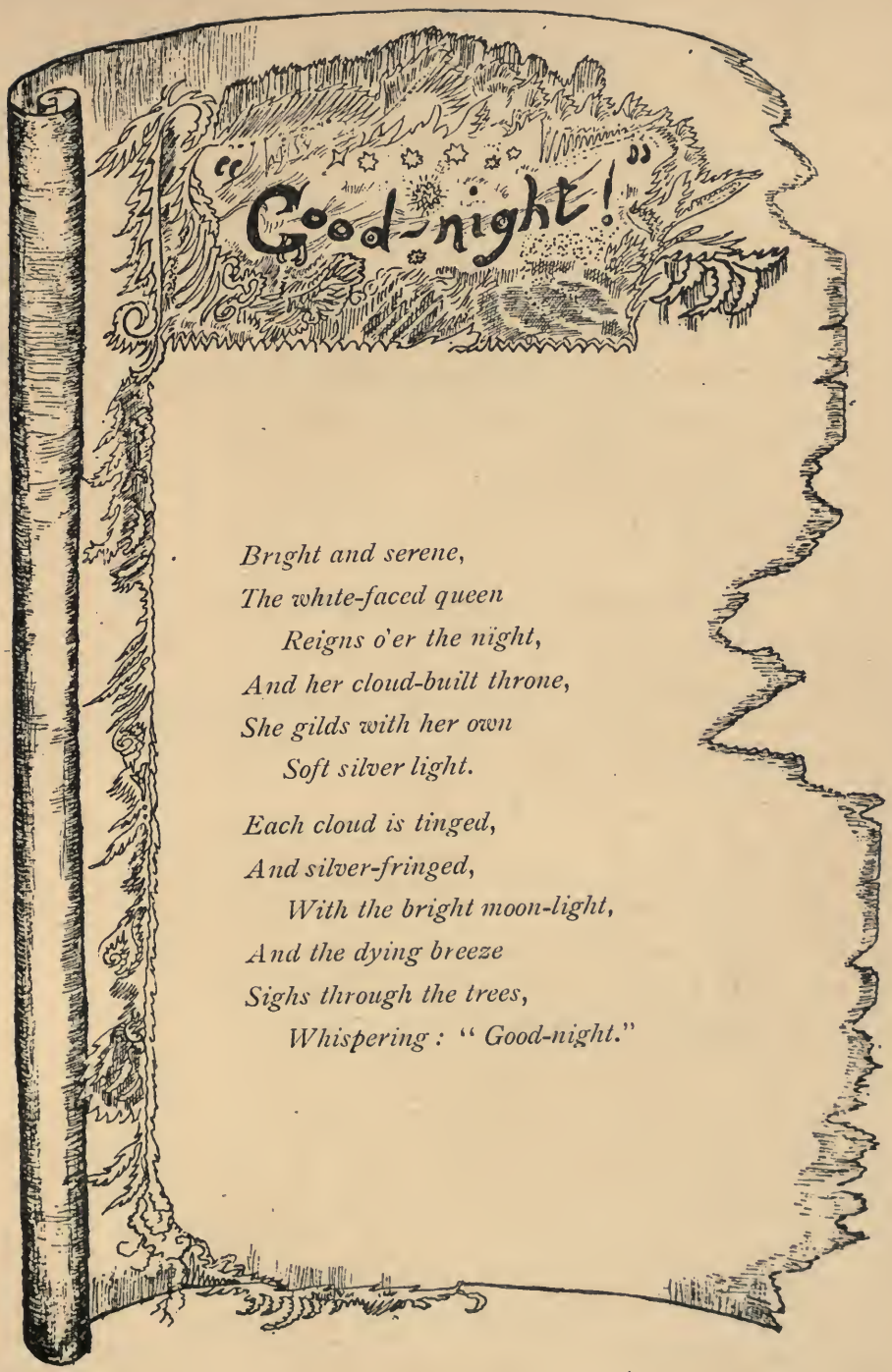
He is a poet, worthy of the name,
Who fetters not his soul to earthly fame,
Who binds his fancy to no world desire,
Whose soul is ever free to soar higher
Than selfish, sordid hopes of earth-bound men.
For there are thoughts beyond the power of pen,
Strange wonder-thoughts which words cannot
control,
Thoughts written only in the poet's soul.

TO ———

Do songless birds ever desire to sing?
My soul alone may touch the sacred string;
My pen may ne'er present an offering
Worthy the shrine of poesy.
And thus I thought, and then said—"Is it so?"
Some of the fairest flowers but slowly grow.
Deep in my soul I search—I only know
My love for thee is poetry.

SLEEPING THOUGHTS.

Wake, sleeping soul, persuade my idle pen
To covet the reflection of my dreams.
The broken shadows die and live again
Upon the surface of the restless streams,
But the calm lake, upon its peaceful breast,
Nurses reflection with a tender care ;
So in the peaceful soul will beauty rest,
Till earthly thoughts usurp its presence there.
Then will imperfect pictures form and fade
To cheat the shallows of the wand'ring brain,
And then will inspiration seem afraid
To woo the depth of nobler thought again.
My soul sleeps now, but when the morning gleams
My soul shall wake, my love shall know my dreams.



Bright and serene,
The white-faced queen
Reigns o'er the night,
And her cloud-built throne,
She gilds with her own
Soft silver light.

Each cloud is tinged,
And silver-fringed,
With the bright moon-light,
And the dying breeze
Sighs through the trees,
Whispering: "Good-night."

THE LAND OF DREAMS.

Remembrance leads my ever willing mind
To dream of days long years have left behind.

Yes, years have passed, but mem'ries live to-day,
Which tide of time can never wash away.

Queen of those love-lit days, I dream of thee,
Thy voice I hear, and thy dear face I see.

'Twas Summer when we wandered hand in hand
Through the sweet gardens of Love's Fairy-land.

Although Remembrance only holds thee here,
Hopes of fair Future sometimes bring thee near,
And when I sleep all present Sorrow dies,
For once again I gaze into your eyes,
And while the Sun of Love in glory gleams,
We walk together in the Land of Dreams.

A black cloud is there,
In the sky so fair,
Like an impure thought in a virtuous mind;
It may be the night,
In her hasty flight,
Had left part of her robe behind.

EPILOGUE.

These are my day-dreams, 'mid the selfish strife,
In an over-crowded walk of life.
Sometimes the sunshine gleams,
And though I cannot carve my name
Upon the summit-stone of fame,
I am happy in my dreams.

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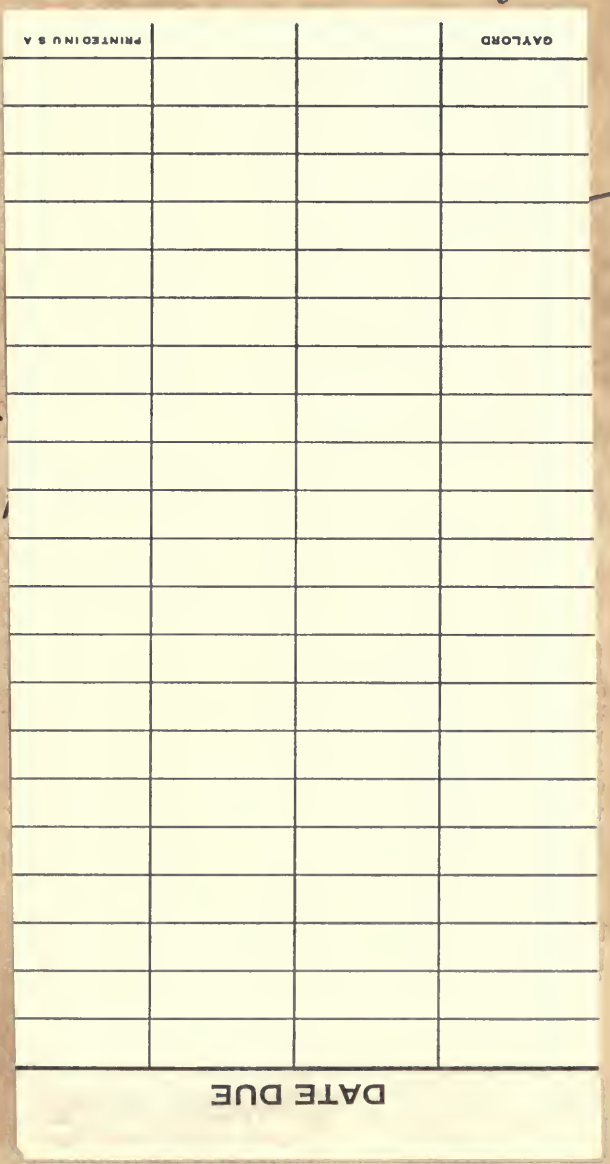

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